DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 616 EA 012 790

AUTHOR	Bryant, B. J.; And Others
TITLE	Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts. ASCUS Research Report.
INSTITUTION	Association for School, College, and University Staffing, Madison, Wis.
PUB DATE	78
NOTE	16p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ASCUS, Box 4411, Madison, WI 53711 ($4.00 non-members; first copy free to members; additional copies $2.00 for members; payment should accompany orders).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Qualifications; *Administrators; *Administrator Selection; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employer Attitudes; *Personnel Selection; *Superintendents

ABSTRACT

A nationwide questionnaire provided the data for this study to gain insight into factors that are utilized in securing school administrators. The questionnaire was distributed to more than 200 superintendents and a return of 21 percent was realized. The survey revealed a continuing and close relationship between college placement officers and employers of school administrators, although school board associations and other agencies are becoming more involved in the school administrator selection process. Other findings indicated the importance of businesslike letters of application, possession of humanistic qualities, well-groomed personal appearance, previous administrative experience, letters of reference, verbal skills, self-confidence, and poise. (Author/WD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ASCUS RESEARCH REPORT

ED198616

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Kerstein

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 012 790

ASCUS

Association for School, College and University Staffing

Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts

Summer/Fall 1978

ASCUS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

B. J. Bryant University of Illinois
Parker Lawlis, Illinois State University
Everett Nicholson, Purdue University
Batt P. Maher, Chairperson, Western Illinois University

One copy of this report is sent to all ASCUS members free of charge; additional copies are available to members at the rate of $2.00 per copy. The per copy rate to non-members is $4.00 each. Orders with payment should be sent to:

ASCUS
Box 4411
Madison, WI 53711

This report should not be copied.

EMPLOYMENT FACTORS USED IN HIRING ADMINISTRATORS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Background of the Study

The importance of providing the best possible leadership for our schools has long been recognized. School Administrators have been described in various ways such as facilitators, inhibitors, gatekeepers, educational statesmen, and catalysts, to name a few. Regardless of their role which probably varies with the time and situation, it is encumbent upon school officials to recruit, select and employ the best educational leadership talent available. With this in mind, a nation wide study was conducted to gain insight into factors which are utilized in securing school administrators.

The study borrowed heavily from the methodology and instrumentation of one conducted at Northwest Missouri State University by Merle R. Lesher and Stanley Wade titled A Nationwide Study of Teacher Employment Practices. In the study being reported, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed nationwide to more than 200 administrator employers throughout the country. A return of approximately 21 percent was realized. This may be a limitation to the study but was considered sufficient due to the broadly-based population covered.

The questionnaire was composed of four different sections with one of them being open-ended questions. There were 27 major items on the instrument. In the following section the findings of the study are presented.

Findings, Conclusions and Implications

A. TABLE ONE - It is apparent that college and university placement bureaus still are the most single important source of administrative candidates, although promotion from within the district is also rated highly. Commercial agencies and newspaper advertisements are not very significant sources of candidates.

B. TABLE TWO - When letters of application were considered in relation to their importance to the employer considering them, proper business letter form with relevant content were rated highest. Most respondents also were highly supportive of neatly written and grammatically correct letters. It behooves candidates to become very proficient in the development of their letter of application.

C. TABLE THREE - It is interesting to note that humanism rated as the most important of the selected qualities of the administrative candidate. How one determines such a quality needs further investigation. Previous administrative experience was rated above average or highly important by more than 85 percent of the respondents.

Among those qualities cited in the table, college grade point average does not seem to be as important as the other five qualities. Previous research would suggest intelligence as one of the few key identifiable distinguishing characteristics of good leadership. (One must assume that intelligence is highly related to college grade point averages).

Emphasis on the need for the candidate to have knowledge of administrative theory and principles is a bit paradoxical to the importance attached to the college grade point average cited above. An implication might be that university training in educational administration is considered highly relevant. In addition almost 9 out of 10 felt the personal appearance of the administrative candidate was quite impactful.

D. TABLE FOUR - When administrator employers were asked which screening factors they emphasized in the selection process, the personal interview was rated as the most important of all those considered. Over 90 percent rated the personal interview as above average or highly important, a finding which is not unexpected. Professional placement credentials also rate very high in the screening process as does a completed application form.

E. TABLE FIVE - As placement and staff members consider the importance of various elements of credential files of experienced administrative candidates, special attention should be placed on the letters of reference from the superintendents, principals and other school employers who wrote a letter for the candidate. Those letters are unquestionably the most important ones in the credential files according to respondents of this study. Communication with personal acquaintances was a distant second, although substantial. Less than one-third of the respondents rated letters of reference from college faculty members as being above average or high in importance.

The lowest ranking was given to the importance of the undergraduate grade point average and that of the graduate program was rated only slightly higher.

F. TABLE SIX - When considering placement credential files of inexperienced administrative candidates, letters of reference from college faculty members were considered more important than was the case in the previous table for experienced administrators. They still were not nearly as highly rated as were those letters of reference from school administrators. Grade point averages were rated somewhat similar for each group, experienced and inexperienced candidates. In both instances placement officials should be aware that letters of reference from professional people other than educators are allocated very mediocre ratings of importance.

G. TABLE SEVEN - More than 9 out of 10 employers of administrative candidates cited four characteristics which were extremely important for the candidate. They were (1) appearing to be genuinely interested in the position, (2) having good verbal skills, (3) appearing self-confident and poised and (4) having the ability to respond to questions concerning administration of schools. These suggestions should be passed along to prospective administrators. Of course the data also suggests a neat and well-groomed appearance as well as being fortified with background information concerning the district in which employment is sought.

H. TABLE EIGHT - A series of questions was given to the employers relating to hiring practices of school administrators. It was interesting to note that the majority of the employers did not object to receiving letters of application which have been written by hand rather than typed. Perhaps a little suprising

too was that an overwhelming majority of the employers did not object to the initial contact of the applicant being made by telephone nor did they generally object to being contacted by telephone after an interview was completed.

Internal consistency within the study was demonstrated by responses relating to the professional ethics of advertising in newspapers, the need for completed application forms and the like.

I. TABLE NINE - In regard to the continuing controversy on whether letters of reference contained in the credential files should be open or closed about one third of the respondents indicated that it really didn't make any difference. But of the remaining two thirds there was no question but what the employers were in favor of closed files for administrative candidates. A geographic breakdown on this item may prove to be of interest.

J. TABLE TEN - In terms of who interviews the administrative candidate the superintendent, personnel director and selection committee were mentioned by over one half of the respondents. However, it was a different matter in the final selection of the administrative candidate where only the superintendent was listed by a majority of the respondents. It then fell off sharply to less than one of four indicating the school board being the final selector in a practical sense. All other categories received much less mention than the apparent chief selector, the superintendent.

Summary

This study was an initial attempt to secure data of a descriptive nature only. More sophisticated research is needed to gain in-depth insights into employment factors used in hiring school executives. However, it would appear from the responses to the questionnaire that the partnership of the college and university placement offices and the employers of school administrators continue to have a strong relationship with each other. While the open-ended portion of the instrument was not reported, it supports such a notion very strongly. This persists in spite of some indications that school board associations and other agencies were involved in the school administrator selection process. If placement officials in colleges and universities desire to continue as a dominant source of administrative candidates, personal visitations and other communication links must be maintained periodically.

TABLE ONE

IMPORTANCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CANDIDATE SOURCE
BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Source	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Commercial Agencies	4.8%	2.4%	11.9%	9.5%	26.2%	45.2%
College or University Placement Bureaus	60.5	23.2	11.6	4.6	0.0	0.0
Letters of Inquiry	15.9	40.9	36.4	4.6	2.3	0.0
Newspaper Advertisements	5.1	17.9	35.9	7.7	12.8	20.5
Personal Contacts	32.6	44.2	18.6	2.3	2.3	0.0
Employees Already in the District	46.5	25.6	18.6	2.3	2.3	2.3

TABLE TWO

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE LETTER OF APPLICATION
BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Aspect	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Relevant Content	74.4%	11.6%	9.3%	2.3%	2.3%	0.0%
Grammatically Correct	57.1	21.4	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Neatly Written	45.2	33.3	16.7	2.4	2.4	0.0
Originality	26.8	36.6	24.4	12.2	0.0	0.0
Proper Business Letter Form	76.7	18.6	2.3	0.0	0.0	2.3

TABLE THREE

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED QUALITIES
WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATOR
BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Quality	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Knowledge of administrative theory or principles	39.5%	48.8%	9.3%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%
College grade point average	9.5	38.1	42.9	4.8	0.0	4.8
Personal Appearance	27.3	61.4	6.8	2.8	2.8	0.0
Humanism	74.4	20.9	2.3	0.0	2.3	0.0
Ability to maintain student control	28.2	48.7	20.5	2.6	0.0	0.0
Previous administrative experience	59.1	27.3	6.8	0.0	2.3	4.6

TABLE FOUR

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SCREENING FACTORS IN ADMINISTRATOR SELECTION PROCESS
BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Screening Factor	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Completed application form	53.5%	27.9%	7.0%	2.3%	7.0%	2.3%
Information secured from personal acquaintances	28.6	30.9	26.2	7.1	4.8	2.4
Letter of application	10.0	37.5	45.0	7.5	0.0	0.0
Professional placement credentials	46.5	41.9	7.0	2.3	2.3	0.0
Personal interview	77.3	13.6	4.6	0.0	0.0	4.6

TABLE FIVE

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT CREDENTIALS WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF EXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATORS BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Segment	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Letters of reference from college faculty members	7.0%	20.9%	46.5%	18.6%	2.3%	4.6%
Letters of reference from school board members	9.5	35.7	35.7	4.8	9.5	4.8
Letters of reference from professional people other than educators	4.6	20.9	55.8	11.6	4.6	2.3
Letters of reference from school employers (superintendents, principals, etc.)	81.9	6.8	6.8	0.0	0.0	4.5
Undergraduate grade point average	2.5	20.0	45.0	22.5	5.0	5.0
Graduate grade point average	12.2	34.2	48.8	4.9	0.0	0.0
Communication with personnal acquaintances	25.0	40.0	20.0	7.5	7.5	0.0

TABLE SIX

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT CREDENTIALS WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF INEXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATORS BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Segment	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Letters of reference from college faculty members	17.1%	29.3%	34.2%	9.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Letters of reference from fellow teachers	11.9	21.4	33.3	26.2	4.8	2.4
Letters of reference from administrators	54.8	30.9	7.1	2.4	0.0	4.8
Letters of reference from professional people other than educators	9.8	21.9	48.8	14.6	2.4	2.4
Undergraduate grade point average	9.8	19.5	41.5	21.9	7.3	0.0
Graduate grade point average	10.0	45.0	32.5	7.5	5.0	0.0

TABLE SEVEN

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS DISPLAYED BY ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICANTS IN THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS BY PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	Importance					
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Little	None
Appearance of being genuinely interested in the position	52.4%	38.1%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Facility for verbal communication	50.0	42.9	4.8	0.0	0.0	2.4
Neat and well-groomed appearance	39.0	43.9	12.2	4.9	0.0	0.0
Self-confident and poised appearance	58.5	31.7	2.4	2.4	4.9	0.0
Well-informed about the school district	19.1	54.8	19.1	4.8	2.4	0.0
Ability to respond to questions concerning administration of schools	80.9	9.5	7.1	0.0	0.0	2.4

TABLE EIGHT

RESPONSES OF EMPLOYERS TO PRACTICES
IN THE HIRING OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS BY PERCENTAGES

Question Number	Responses	
	Yes	No
1. Do you consider advertising administrative vacancies in the newspapers an ethical professional practice?	68.3%	31.7%
2. Do you object to applicants making their initial contact by telephone?	18.6	81.4
3. Do you object to receiving a letter of application which has been written by hand rather than typed?	39.5	60.5
4. Do you prefer that the applicant enclose a stamped, pre-addressed enveiope with the letter of application?	32.5	67.5
5. Do you require the applicant to complete an application form?	90.7	9.3
6. Do you prefer that a resume be enclosed with the letter of application?	97.7	2.3
7. Do you object to receiving a resume that has been machine duplicated?	20.9	79.1
8. Do you object to the applicant contacting you by telephone after the interview?	28.6	71.4

TABLE NINE

PREFERENCE OF EMPLOYERS FOR LETTERS OF REFERENCE BEING OPEN OR CLOSED
IN THE CREDENTIAL FILES OF ADMINISTRATIVE CANDIDATES BY PERCENTAGES

Status of File	Percentages Preferring
1. The letters of reference in the candidates credential file should be open to the candidate.	9.3%
2. The letters of reference in the candidates credential file should be closed to the candidate.	58.1
3. It is not important whether the letters of reference in the candidates credential file are open or closed to the candidate.	32.6

TABLE TEN

FACTORS RELATED TO INTERVIEWING, SELECTING AND INFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE CANDIDATES BY EMPLOYERS IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGES

Factor	Percentage of Respondents
1. Who interviews the administrative candidate?	
a. all members of the administrative team	30.2%
b. personnel director	60.5
c. school board members	20.9
d. selection committee	51.2
e. the superintendent	60.5
2. In a practical sense, who makes the final selection?	
a. members of the administrative team	18.6
b. personnel director	18.6
c. selection committee	11.6
d. the superintendent	58.1
e. the school board	23.3
3. What follow-up procedure do you use after the interview?	
a. inform successful candidate by telephone	69.8
b. send letter to all applicants informing them of acceptance or rejection	76.7
c. send letter only to successful candidates	9.3
d. inform unsuccessful candidates	27.9